

Asia Theories International Symposium

2015

Waiting: Time/Theory/Action in Global Asias

October 2-4, 2015

Call for Papers

Deadline for proposal submission:

February 15, 2015

**[*Important Notice: The previous email account is inaccessible;
please (re)send your submissions to thsconf@gmail.com.]**

Co-organized by the [Taiwan Humanities Society](#) and the [University of California Humanities Research Institute](#), the 2015 Asia Theories International Symposium will be hosted by the [Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies, National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, TAIWAN](#). The theme of the symposium is “**Waiting: Time/Theory/Action in Global Asias.**”

Waiting is aporetic, and self-surpassing upon being completed. It can be conceptualized as an act that exists in an out-of-joint or liminal time, in which hope, possibility and end are simultaneously suspended, presupposed and anticipated. Further intimated in this act is a sabbatical gesture that aims to cancel its own time and condition in order to fulfill its goal predicated on some faith that points toward another time and world. But what becomes of waiting when these constitutive factors—fidelity and temporal multiplicity—verge on disappearance in our contemporary world? And what possibilities about waiting remain to be envisaged and theorized?

The bio-capitalist apparatus of global governing processes people in chronic waiting in all sorts of milieu and circumstance. We struggle with term periods and expiration dates; we find ourselves intermittently placed in lines, on hold or on waiting lists, for the first sale of the ever-coming newest smartphone models, for train and flight transits, or for medication, hospitalization or death. Entrapped in our becoming-data and becoming-processed, we have little sovereignty regarding time and are susceptible to losing sense of timeliness. We are unable to bring waiting to an end in the administrative informational network. But paradoxically, we appear to be no longer capable of waiting, so we crave for on-command, instantaneous satisfaction by means of the real-time technologies of convenience. And neoliberal regimes often wield the pretext of efficiency to reject waiting, casting us into a manic-depressive frenzy of development and production, which affects academics as well. In either scenario, time seems to be disappearing, dissolving into the speed of calculation, management and control. Time, in short, is becoming thin.

On the other hand, time is becoming thick, intense and critical. Across Asia, all-pervasive tensions and crises emerge along with the end of the Cold War, the cataclysmic rise of China, its threats to neighboring societies and its crackdowns on opposition, the 1997 Hong Kong handover, the

territorial conflicts in this region, the unpredictable risks of North Korea, the ecological disasters and political polemics in Southeast Asia and Japan, the tensions in Pakistan and with India, to name just a few. All these factors are simultaneously in very complicated relation with the sweeping large-scale changes in geopolitics and capitalism in the age of globalization. Asian societies are implicated in a vertigo of fluctuations coupled with utter uncertainties.

Many people in these societies wait, in hope that nothing eventful, or disastrous, will ever come. Manifest symptoms can be detected everywhere. But an increasing number of people are agitated, mobilizing themselves against the emerging ecological, economic, political, cultural and existential threats and exploitations. As a result, protests, riots and social movements have proliferated in response to hopeless waiting in nonchalance or acquiescence.

Here waiting should matter, because the piece of liminal time won in these struggles concerns the ability to slow down and measure the determining apparatus, in order to act beyond all speeds defined by it. In these cases, we seem to see a peculiar mode of waiting distinguished by the ability of waiting in action or acting in waiting, an ability required for the age of total mobilization.

For the humanities and intellectual societies, also being agitated and mobilized for action and engagement, this singular mode of waiting requires conceptualization. New theoretical paradigms, it follows, are waiting. Furthermore and reflexively, this bears on theory itself. If “slowing down” is decisive for action, theory may also need to wait to immobilize the epistemological apparatus in order to act beyond all speeds defined by it at any given time, including the real time of global exchange of ideas and theories. This concerns theory *per se* because its efficacy lies in its ability to stop and capture not just material but ideational territorialized movements. Theory, that is, acts in and by waiting. There should be a definitive, if not singular, mode of waiting pertaining to theory, which points to its nature and potentiality as well as to its time, a liminal piece won by thinking. This perspective calls for experimental epistemological practices that might be able to meet the pragmatic as well as theoretical exigencies, especially in regard to the non-West, and to Asias locally and globally manifested, experienced and expressed.

With this symposium, we seek to address the topic of waiting in relation to time, theory and action in our contemporary world. We seek for papers that expound the conditions, (im)possibilities, and creative practices of waiting in response to the phenomena and questions outlined here. We welcome theoretical papers on Asia, which may engage with Western as well as Asian theory, create theories from case studies or embark on theory experiments.

The official language for the symposium is English. The working deadline for proposals is **February 15, 2015**. Notice of acceptance will be sent by **March 31, 2015**. Please send your proposal (300-500 words) and brief curriculum vitae to: thsconf@gmail.com